

ARTICLE 3: Sustainable Professional Development

Districts shift from traditional professional development models to a culture of ongoing learning.

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District Administration, November 2012

The focus of this article is on the need to shift professional development models from a one size fits all implementation to designing supports that meet the needs of our learners. Creating cultures of ongoing learning among administrators and teachers is the responsibility of everyone. Over the years we have shifted teaching to ensure that the needs of various student groups are met however many districts and schools still conduct professional development that is the same for all staff. The article brings about the discussion of moving away from a one size fits all approach when implementing professional development to a strategically designed system that allows teacher and teacher teams to work together on key areas needed to support student learning.

Another important focus of the article is on the link between highly effective professional development approaches and differentiated approaches to teacher training, increased collegial collaboration and greater risk taking. To support this movement there is an emphasis on the numerous technology supports which have been designed and used to help ongoing learning and reflection of practice. Some of these include Solution Tree, Teachscape and Web 2.0. These types of technology supports allow teachers to evaluate their practice and identify areas for development. It can also design professional

development specific to those needs by suggesting videos to support the indicators assigned to each educator. Some additional ways to use technology to sustain professional development by engaging participants in collaborative research projects using online spaces. These online spaces allow video chat, digital field trips, keeping parents in the loop. Some social media spaces suggested include wikispaces, Diigo, and Google+ Hangout. Providing time for common meeting to take place, WiFi, technology and devices to support this type of learning are crucial to its success.

Developing distributed leadership can also empower leaders to ensure sustainability. This requires administrators to create opportunity for distributed leadership to be implemented. By identify in what teachers know and are able to do. Decisions are then made by the teacher leaders regarding next steps to focus on rather than administrators imposing this work on them. An important key to ensuring the success of distributed leadership and sustainable professional development is to embed teacher team collaboration into the school culture. One way to support this work is by introducing protocols and procedures for working together and looking at student work. Nussbaum-Beach's expresses, "be a learner first a leader second" emphasizing the importance of on going learning and how it can translate into a sustainable professional development model that engages everyone in collaborative work that is tailored to their needs rather than the one size fits all approach.